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TAGS: [KPAO](#) [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [PREL](#) [MEDIA](#) [REACTION](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION IRANIAN LEADER'S THREAT TO THE
US US ESPIONAGE OPERATIONS IN LATIN AMERICA US CIVIC-
MILITARY TIES US-URUGUAYAN FTA MERCOSUR AND CHAVEZ
ANNE KRUEGER LEAVING IMF CURRENT STATUS OF THE US
ECONOMY US IMMIGRATION POLICY 04/27/06

[1. SUMMARY STATEMENT](#)

Today's most important international stories include Iranian Ayatollah Khamenei's serious war threat to the US; the US reinforcing its espionage operations in Latin America; the implications of the complaints by several US military retirees against US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld; a US-Uruguayan FTA; ties

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between Mercosur and Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez; the war in Iraq; Anne Krueger reportedly leaving her position at the IMF; the current status of the US economy and its worldwide impact; and the US immigration policy.

[2. OPINION PIECES AND KEY STORIES](#)

- "Iranian leader launches serious war threat to the US"

Business-financial "Ambito Financiero" (04/27) reports "Just a few hours away from the expiration date of the UN Security Council's ultimatum imposed on Iran for the suspension of its uranium enrichment program, the supreme leader of Iran, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei warned yesterday that a potential US attack against Iran will unleash a response all over the world that would be twice as violent.

"In reference to possible terrorist acts, Khamenei said 'Let Americans know that in the event of a possible invasion of Iran, their interests all over the world will be damaged wherever possible. The Iranian people will respond to any attack.'"

- "The US reinforces its espionage operations in Latin America"

Hugo Alconada Mon, Washington-based correspondent for daily-of-record "La Nacion," writes (04/27)
"Determined to prevent attacks like the September 11 attacks and to correct the big intelligence mistakes that led to the war in Iraq, President George W. Bush ordered an increase in the number of spies to be deployed to Latin America in the framework of a global surveillance strategy.

"Spies should contribute information on groups, leaders or territories that represent a threat to the US in the region.

"According to official reports, the main topics of concern are: President Hugo Chavez, the Triple Border, Cuba, ties between the FARC and drug trafficking, and the porous land border with Mexico.

"The presidential order is carried out by the first US Director of National Intelligence, John Negroponte, who oversees the 16 US intelligence agencies, with a budget of 40 billion dollars per year.

"... In the post-September 11 world, Washington's military and intelligence interest in Latin America is focused on getting to know from inside the clandestine networks that Al Qaeda or other similar organization could be using to enter the US and launch another attack...

"Argentina has been praised by the US Department of State for the checks on containers that arrive at the Buenos Aires port, but, according to Lieutenant Colonel Philip Abbot, an expert in Latin America at the US Army, the risk posed by the Triple Border 'is not a myth.'"

- "Washington acknowledges it spies on the hemisphere at Cold War levels"

Left-of-center "Pagina 12" reports (04/27) "According to US Director of National Intelligence John Negroponte, Washington is again focusing on its backyard. During the last few years, the US has 'strengthened' its espionage operations in Latin America at a level that can only be compared with that of the Cold War.

"This was ordered by the Bush administration particularly after the September 11 attacks based on the importance the 'war on terrorism' has for the Bush administration.

"According to Negroponte, US agencies are focusing on what they call 'Human Intelligence,' which consists of recruiting spies among the citizens of countries under surveillance and increasing the US staff (intelligence agents, diplomats, anti-drug agents, FBI, etc.) in the place."

- "A coup in the US?"

Daily-of-record "La Nacion" carries an op-ed piece by Juan Gabriel Tokatlian, professor of International Relations at Universidad de San Andres, who writes (04/27) "Without any question marks and as the main story of its April issue, US magazine Harpers called on four experts in military issues to discuss in the framework of headline 'American Coup d'Etat: Military Thinkers Discuss the Unthinkable.'

"The very sensitive civil-military balance has been altered for years...

"Whether it is due to growing military autonomy vis--vis civilians or a push by some civilians to favor a greater military role in public affairs, the truth is that ever since the September 11 attacks, we have noticed a gradual militarization of US international policies with unpredictable national consequences.

"... The military's request for US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's resignation is a disturbing fact.

While it is not a coup, it is a warning for US democracy. The vehement public statements made by four former army generals and two former Marine generals (who represent 75% of the entire military body) show the undeniable presence of the military in the public debate... and their disgraceful malaise with the political handling of military affairs.

"Their words not only targeted the US Defense Secretary but implied frontal and unaccustomed

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criticism of the president now that the country is in war... Whatever the evolution of this case and the immediate future of the deplorable Bush administration will be, the weakening of the US civil power is noteworthy and disturbing. And this is not good either for them or for the world."

- "Tabare winks again on the idea of an FTA with the US"

Mariano Perez de Eulate, columnist of leading "Clarín," comments (04/27) "Uruguayan President Tabare Vazquez made a conclusive gesture toward the US, which takes on particular importance due to the conflict between Uruguay and Argentina over the pulp mills in Fray Bentos... During a visit in Mexico, where Vazquez was received by his counterpart Vicente Fox, Tabare asserted that he is willing to reach an FTA with the US, an issue that fractured the Mar del Plata Summit of the Americas.

"Vazquez's position strongly impacted Uruguayan political circles because on May 4 he will meet with US President George W. Bush. Many believe that the seeds of a bilateral trade deal could emerge from that meeting."

- "Chavez deepens disagreement at Mercosur, which does not react"

Joaquin Morales Sola, political columnist of daily-of-record "La Nación," writes (04/27) "Mercosur no longer is what it used to be... Now, it has entered a political crisis that is difficult to resolve. It showed a pathetic image - there were two Mercosur meetings with different protagonists in only one week.

"... An important presence of discord is that of

Chavez, who seems to vent disagreement. A different Chavez has been snaking in Latin America lately. The leader of two or three years ago, more cautious and humble in the international scenario, grew in the region with the impetus of the price of the oil barrel.

"Neither Brazil nor Argentina welcomed his radiant presence in the short Mercosur meeting in Asunción of Uruguayan President Tabare Vazquez, Paraguayan President Duarte Frutos and Bolivian President Morales.

"... Brazil is bothered because it perceives that Chavez has started to object to its regional leadership and is also a destructive element in Latin America... Neither Brazil nor Argentina wants a confrontation with Washington and, furthermore, they have committed themselves with the US to 'containing' Chavez. One thing is clear these days. No one can contain Chavez.

"... Re Argentina, in return for his financial protection, Chavez will ask Kirchner to follow him on

his pro-Iranian whim by voting at the UN so that Venezuela obtains a temporary chair at the UN Security Council, which the US opposes."

- "The 'Bolivarian axis' has its FTA"

Pablo Stefanoni, on special assignment in La Paz for left-of-center "Pagina 12," comments (04/27) "While the Andean Community of Nations meeting in Lima was ending in failure, Evo Morales announced that next weekend documents will be signed in Havana to incorporate Bolivia into the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas, which was signed by Cuba and Venezuela one year ago, and these documents will lay the groundwork for an upcoming Free Trade Deal of the Peoples, which is being promoted by the Bolivian president.

"For now, signatories are the three countries most fervently rejecting the FTA with the US because they believe it is 'annexationist' and 'neo-liberal,' but Bolivian official sources are enthusiastic about joining Peru... and Ecuador to the hemispheric 'anti-neo-liberal' crusade."

- "About how to undo a country"

Left-of-center "Pagina 12" carries an opinion piece by Uruguayan writer Juan Gelman, who writes (04/27) "It was clear from the very beginning - the US goal in Iraq was to divide it into regions, divide the people according to different religious sects, and organize inter-ethnic violence in order to justify a long occupation of the country and guarantee the exploitation of its energy wealth.

"The focus of the occupation of Iraq is the organization of violence, and intelligence services are the mastermind of it. And they are Yankees, of course.

"As a former CIA agent told 'The Washington Post,' those services 'are the heart and soul of a new country.'"

- "Blue skies ahead?"

James Neilson, contributor to liberal, English-language "Buenos Aires Herald," writes (04/27) "... A cloud on the horizon hangs over the US: rightly or wrongly, skeptics say that unless its inhabitants save a great deal more the superpower is about to suffer a huge financial crisis that will halt the great international boom in its tracks not just because so much depend on the spendthrift ways of the North American consumer but also because panic-stricken congressmen would react by putting up protectionist barriers.

"They also suspect that if pushed too far the Chinese

could decide to dump the innumerable USG bonds they have collected over the years even though they too would lose big as a result. Such bleak predictions have been made for years without much happening, but that does not mean that the US can continue to defy the laws of economic gravity for ever."

- "Krueger, 'the IMF's iron lady' will leave her position"

Hugo Alconada Mon, Washington-based correspondent for daily-of-record "La Nacion," writes (04/27) "According to an IMF communiqu, Anne Krueger, 'the iron lady' of international finance, the economist whose comments

and demands enraged, shocked and intimidated Argentine authorities over the last five years, will leave her position at the IMF in August.

"... According to two IMF officials, the name of her successor is a riddle, although versions on supposed candidates already include the names of two Americans - former number two at the US Treasury Department, John Taylor..., and current number two at the US Department of State, Robert Zoellick, former USTR."

13. EDITORIALS

- "The US immigration problem"

An editorial in daily-of-record "La Nacion" reads (04/27) "The treatment of the immigration problem in the US... threatens to become a problem without apparent solution, and it is one of the topics of the November election campaign.

"... The US Congress is currently debating an overall reform of the country's immigration system. It is trapped in a dilemma- it does not know whether it should allow the 12 million illegal immigrants to stay under a legal status or expel them, as the most extreme sectors propose, with its unwanted effect on the economy.

"... We hope the resolution adopted by the US vis--vis this sensitive issue is not guided by xenophobia but by the same reasons that made this country seen as the cradle of freedom and respect for civil rights."

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